

town lived on. Thanks to their efforts, the unique and colorful tradition of Morgan's Point will live on for future generations of Texans to enjoy.

ITALIAN-AMERICAN LEADERS IN MICHIGAN

HON. JOE KNOLLENBERG

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 16, 1997

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor two great Italian-American community leaders in southeastern Michigan, Judge Michael Martone and Dr. Augustine Perrotta. Each has been named Metropolitan Detroit's 1997 Italian-American of the Year by the Italian Study Club.

Judge Martone, the son of a first generation Italian-American, was elected to the district court bench in 1992. He created the Court in the Schools-Critical Life Choices, a program that relocates his courtroom to local schools. Students witness defendants being fined, punished, or jailed for drunk driving, drug possession, and other crimes.

The second part of the judge's program includes an interactive dialog about what the students witnessed and the lessons they can learn.

Judge Martone, whose program has been copied by other States and featured on NBC's "Today Show," remains very active in the local community with his wife Martha and their two sons, Jonathan and James.

Dr. Augustine Perrotta, a first generation Italian-American born after Mount Vesuvius' eruption drove his family from their ancestral home in Arienzo, worked his way through college and medical school, graduating as valedictorian of his medical school class.

Named the "Top Doc" by Detroit Monthly Magazine in 1995, Dr. Perrotta is a leader in the medical community serving on the boards of numerous hospitals in southeastern Michigan.

His philosophy of practice has been to use humor as medicine and he is well known for maintaining Italian traditions in his home. His hospitality, warmth, and kindness are not only enjoyed by his wife Grace and their three children, but each and every one of his patients.

Judge Martone and Dr. Perrotta are outstanding community leaders. As we enjoy the 23d annual Festa Italiana, I want to recommend them and thank them for their long-time service and loyal commitment to our community.

DOGS HAVE MORE FREEDOM

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 16, 1997

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, "Dogs have more freedom than us; at least they are not afraid to go outside." Mr. Speaker, this is the conclusion of a young Romani father in Slovakia who recounted his experience with growing skinhead violence in his country. His story is, regrettably, just one of the many documented in a January 1997 re-

port prepared by the European Roma Rights Center [ERRC] entitled "Time of the Skinheads: Denial and Exclusion of Roma in Slovakia." This study describes a grim pattern of violent assaults against Roma perpetrated by skinhead extremists; it also suggests that local police forces have been, at best, unwilling to fulfill their obligation to protect their citizens and, at worst, have themselves actually engaged in violence against Roma. Descriptions of a 1995 organized attack on the entire Romani community in the town of Jarovnice—something that reads like a pogrom from a bygone era—were especially chilling.

Since Slovakia became an independent state in 1993, a great deal of international attention has, rightly, focused on the status of the Hungarian minority in that country, a community that makes up approximately 10 percent of the population. Slovakia also has another large minority population which is less well known abroad. While the exact number of Roma in Slovakia is contested, it is estimated to be in the hundreds of thousands. These people—the survivors of Nazi efforts to eradicate the Roma altogether—now face increasing violent attacks against their homes, their villages, and their lives.

The problems of Roma in post-Communist European countries are many, and often defy easy answers. But at least three of the problems described in "Time of the Skinheads" do have obvious solutions. First, the Slovak Government has failed to demonstrate any serious effort to acknowledge and address the widespread problem of violent skinhead attacks on Roma. On the contrary, some public officials—members of the ruling coalition—have repeatedly made crude racist remarks about the Roma. As long as such remarks stand uncontested or unchallenged by Prime Minister Meciar, skinheads will believe that they can attack Roma with impunity. Clearly, local police officials take their cues from the top. Accordingly, any improvement in the situation of Roma in Slovakia must begin with the leadership of that country stating that racism and bigotry will not be tolerated.

Second, the ERRC report described a pattern of excessive use of force by the police against Roma. When the victims seek to bring a complaint against the police, the charges are, in effect, reversed and the Rom is charged with assaulting the police. Significantly, the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture released a report on April 3, which also documented a problem of police brutality in Slovakia.

That report, like the report of the ERRC, noted that the failure to ensure that those charged with a criminal offense have adequate legal representation has significantly contributed to this miscarriage of justice. One of the purposes of providing such representation is to guarantee a fair trial, consistent with the due process of law, and to ensure that those accused of crimes do not have confessions extracted from them by force.

The failure to provide the accused with defense counsel violates one of the most important provisions of the international human rights system—the right to an attorney, a right articulated in article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as para. 5.16 of the OSCE Copenhagen Document. I hope the Slovak Government will take immediate measures to redress this problem.

Finally, the ERRC report on Slovakia indicates that Slovak localities continue to use a system of tightly controlled residency permits to restrict the freedom of movement of Roma. Not only does this practice offend the non-discrimination provisions of the Helsinki process, this system also harkens back to the rigid controls of the Communist days. If people are not permitted to move where the jobs are, how can a free market system flourish?

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this pattern of violence against Roma is not unique to Slovakia. The ERRC, which was founded to defend the human rights of Roma, has also issued major reports on Austria and Romania. In addition, its most recent newsletter reported on problems Roma face in several other European countries. Clearly, there is much more that many governments in Central Europe can and should do to address these problems.

I realize that Slovakia is in the midst of grappling with a very broad range of fundamental questions regarding its development and future. The basic human rights of Roma should be a part of that agenda. I see no better time. Will Slovakia enter the 21st century as a country which seeks to unite its citizens in achieving common goals, or will it lag behind with those countries which have permitted nationalism and racism to divide their people and weaken the very state they worked so hard to create?

SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION LOCAL 2028 AND IRONWORKERS LOCAL 229: SAN DIEGO-IMPERIAL COUNTIES LABOR COUNCIL, AFL-CIO LABOR TO NEIGHBOR AWARD

HON. BOB FILNER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 16, 1997

Mr. FILNER. Mr. Speaker and colleagues, I rise today to recognize the Service Employees International Union Local 2028 [SEIU] and the Ironworkers Local 229 as they are honored by the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council, AFL-CIO, for their strong support of the Labor to Neighbor program in San Diego and the Imperial Valley.

The Labor to Neighbor program educates and involves union members and their families in the campaign to protect jobs and the future of working people in San Diego and Imperial Counties.

The slogan of SEIU Local 2028 is "Politics is Union Business." This slogan embodies the essence of the Labor to Neighbor program. Local 2028 mobilized over 100 volunteers in the 1996 election and has also provided crucial support to the Labor to Neighbor Union Summer Program.

The Ironworkers Local 229 is being recognized for its leadership role in bringing Labor to Neighbor into the Imperial Valley. Local 229 also gave significant support to the Labor to Neighbor Union Summer Program and sponsored a golf tournament to help fund Labor to Neighbor's fall program.

For these activities, the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council, AFL-CIO, recognizes SEIU Local 2028 and the Ironworkers Local 229 with their Labor to Neighbor Award. I am pleased to join in honoring their contributions